

Why Can't Charlie Hebdo's Spirit Include Israel?

The Islamist massacre at Charlie Hebdo has understandably captured global attention because it was a barbaric attack on France and freedom of expression. In a moment of defiant moral clarity, “je suis Charlie” emerged as a popular phrase of solidarity with the victims. Hopefully such clarity persists and extends to those facing similar challenges every day in the Middle East.

Christians and other religious minorities have been beheaded by Islamists for years, but it wasn't until U.S. journalist James Foley was beheaded that the West cared. ISIS raped and slaughtered thousands of Yazidis—leaving the surviving refugees stranded on Mount Sinjar—before the West took notice. However, one Islamist besieging a cafe in Sydney, Australia, that killed two dominated global coverage for the entire 16-hour incident.

Western leaders and media must realize that religious minorities in the Middle East are the canary in the coalmine for the West when it comes to Islamist threats. And, Israel provides the clearest early warning of all, precisely because—despite Israel's location in a region of Islamists and dictatorships—the Jewish state has free elections, freedom of speech, a vigorous political opposition and independent press, equal rights and protections for minorities and women (who are represented in all parts of civil, legal, political, artistic, and economic life), and a prosperous free market economy.

However, had Palestinian gunmen similarly attacked Israel's most important daily newspaper and then escaped, would the event inspire such constant coverage or international sympathy? Israel has suffered countless massacres followed by a suspenseful manhunt for the Islamist terrorists; in each of

these incidents, the world hardly noticed until Israel forcefully responded and Palestinians died (prompting global condemnation of Israel).

However, when there is an attack in Europe, North America, or Australia, there is widespread grief, solidarity, and an acceptance of whatever policy reaction is chosen. But when Israel is targeted, there is almost always a call for "restraint," as happened last November after fatal stabbings by Palestinian terrorists in Tel Aviv and the West Bank.

If two Palestinians entered a European or North American church and attacked worshipers with meat cleavers, killing five people, including priests, the outrage would be palpable in every politician and journalist's voice. But when Israelis were victims of such an attack, Obama's reaction was spineless and tone deaf.

Did Obama condemn the Charlie Hebdo massacre by noting how many Muslims have died at the hands of French military forces operating in Africa and the Middle East? Of course not. Such moral equivocation would be unthinkable with any ally or Western country except Israel.

Similarly, would Secretary of State John Kerry ever suggest that ISIS is somehow motivated by French policies (whether banning Muslim headscarves at public schools or fighting Islamists in Mali)? Obviously not. Yet, Kerry did just that sort of thing with Israel when he suggested that ISIS is driven by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The media's anti-Israel bias is well known but became even more obvious when they couldn't get a simple story about vehicular terrorism against Israelis correct. Compare how *The Guardian* writes accurate headlines when France or Canada suffers an Islamist car attack but not when Israel does.

Consider all of the justifiable news coverage and outrage over the 2013 Boston bombings. Imagine if one of those happened

every week. Would anyone dare suggest that the U.S. make peace with any Islamists demanding changes to U.S. policy?

Yet Israel had such bomb attacks almost every week of 2002 and was invariably asked to restrain itself and make concessions to the very people bombing them (as happened again last summer, when Hamas fired thousands of rockets at Israel).

As Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has ruefully observed, "There is a standard for dictatorships, there is a standard for democracies, and there is still a third standard for the democracy called Israel."

Even when compared to Western democracies, what other country gives incredibly forgiving medical care to terrorists and agrees to treat the children of those working to destroy it? Israel is where a Hamas family member finds refuge when he is a gay convert to Christianity but this is yet another inconvenient fact for the mainstream media (as is the fact that some Israeli Arabs supported the IDF's 2014 war against Hamas).

Why report what contradicts the one-sided, anti-Israel narrative that the media and groups like Human Rights Watch have adopted? That narrative is only reinforced on college campuses (leftist college history professors openly supported Hamas last summer). Nevertheless, U.S. funding of anti-Israel groups continues to aggravate the misinformation problem.

Israel is still the country that everyone loves to hate. So it's the cheap way to please Muslim voters in Europe and oil producers in the Gulf. But what happens to Israel eventually comes to the West, because Israel is an extension of the West. And just as surrendering Czechoslovakia failed to appease the expansionist appetite and murderous rampage of Nazi totalitarianism, so too will feeding Israel to Islamist totalitarianism fail to appease that movement. In the end,

there is no set of concessions—short of civilizational surrender—that the Islamists will accept.

Nevertheless, an EU court decided to remove Hamas from the European Union's terror list, even though Hamas is responsible for scores of terrorist attacks that have murdered hundreds of Israelis, North Americans, and Europeans, and has a charter calling for the destruction of Israel. And Western European countries have voted for Palestinian statehood at the UN and in their parliaments, effectively rewarding Palestinian terrorism and intransigence.

Europe supports the Palestinian Authority as if Hamas couldn't overthrow it in the West Bank as easily as Hamas did in Gaza Strip in 2007. How can Europe not know that Hamas has designs on the West Bank and that any Israeli withdrawal from that territory will only facilitate such a takeover? And how can Europe believe that Israel could ever make peace with Hamas, which has launched three unprovoked wars on Israel in the last five years (in the decade since Israel withdrew from Gaza)?

Moreover, if lofty concerns about self-determination and human rights are the true motivation behind Europe's vocal support for Palestinian independence (despite its undemocratic and violent record), why is Europe deafeningly quiet on Kurdish statehood? Given that six million Jews were annihilated by a genocide on European soil, Europe's hypocrisy on Israel should embarrass the continent even more.

Worse still, Europe's gestures of appeasement only encourage the Islamists. The best response to the Charlie Hebdo attack is to redouble the free expression Islamists meant to stifle. Similarly, the best response to Islamist attacks on the only Mideast democracy, Israel, is to increase support for it.

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Middle East.